

Get a plush upgrade

What's a quick fix to turn a corner, a room or a whole house into a chic and luxurious space? Just add velvet - it's trending now

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Kings used it. It's the byword for sophisticated indulgence. It's long been too expensive, old-fashioned, hard to maintain and over-the-top for city living. But new material and designs are making velvet easier to use than ever before. Think of it as your short-cut to modern aristocratic living, but only if done right.

WHERE TO START

You've probably seen velvet in predominantly deep jewel tones - rich maroons, purples, browns, red and black. But the material is now easy to find in more contemporary lighter palettes, neons and prints as well. "Velvet in rich pastels are best for a luxurious, elegant feel, while a pop of bright colour is the way to go for a quirky vibe," says Shailander Kumar, CEO and founder, Fanusta.

And the way to use them in the home is changing too. Leave the thick velvet curtains, table covers, gilded sofas and furnishings for palaces and museums. The plush fabric needn't cover whole objects

and surfaces - it's popping up in bits and pieces.

"It can be a

part of your living room in a form of a single chair, one curtain, or a set of pillows and comforters," says Husain Johar, founder of Makemyhouse.com. Sapana Jain, principal designer at Heart Homez, suggests picking bright colours for a more contemporary look. "Pick the best quality you can afford because it wears out easily. The more densely woven the back, the better the quality." The idea is not to go overboard as rich fabrics are best when kept to the minimal to add a touch of glam. "Keep in mind the size of your rooms and the furniture you already have. Smaller, more minimalist pieces of velvet work better in a room setting while little larger items make a statement piece," says Kumar.

DÉCOR TALK

Make sure velvet works with the other design elements in your home. Contrast is key.

"Include a luxe, vibrantly coloured sofa against a neutral backdrop, or use the fabric only on lamp shades, throws and rugs," says Gita Ramanan, co-founder of Design Café.

Parul Mittal, director of Greenlam finds that a classic pink couch pairs well with dark

wood floors. "Complementing with all-white interiors or hints of metallic accessories pulls the look together," she says.

Velvet has a naturally lavish and cosy feel, making it the perfect choice for soft furnishings. "Coloured velvet certainly adds a wow-factor to any space," says Hemil Parikh, founder of Elysium Abodes. Sarabjit Singh, founder and architectural designer, Villa Ortiga Design Studio adds, "Velvet can be used on accent chairs and ottomans as highlights."

MAINTENANCE MATTERS

The simplest way to maintain your velvet is to use the hand-



■ Pair velvet-covered chairs with metallic accessories for sophisticated interiors.

VILLA ORTIGA DESIGN STUDIO

held nozzle on a vacuum cleaner on any velvet pieces to pull up dirt that might be caught inside the edges. "Modern velvet is often treated with stain repellents, so you should be able to gently dab the liquid up with a damp towel. For dried stains, dry clean it," says Radeesh Shetty of The Purple Turtles. "Do not dab or rub on the fabric as that will make the liquid seep in. The best is for it to air dry."

COLOUR PLAY

■ An important factor while selecting your statement piece is the colour. "For bright colours such as navy, red, purple, it is best to contrast it against neutral walls and curtains. If you want to use patterned velvet walls or curtains for a royal look, mix and match with wooden furniture and big

velvet rugs," says Adel Sajan, director of Danube Home. ■ "Instead of covering every surface in such a rich fabric, use it in bits and pieces. It can liven up the whole space," says Vishal Charjan, principal architect, vishalarchitects.com. ■ Balance the use of velvet by using other materials - wood, metallic, cotton, glass and linen.



■ Try a stool with velvet cushion for a minimalist feel.

FANUSTA



■ A couch against a neutral backdrop offers a luxe experience.

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■ For a vibrant living room, add bright, velvet pillow covers.